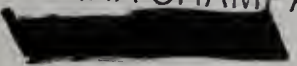


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Minimum Salaries for Library Assistants*

25.11.23
IN the last annual report of the Salaries Committee it was suggested that a discussion of Minimum Salaries by the Council would be interesting. At the Detroit meeting of the Council it was voted "that the Salaries Committee report a minimum salary for discussion by the Council." Accordingly the Committee offers the following resolution:

The American Library Association believes that adequate salaries must be paid to librarians and library assistants if the Public Library is to hold and develop its place as an important educational agency.

It believes that a library assistant with a college education and one year of training in library school should receive not less than \$1,620 a year as a beginning salary; that an assistant with less than a full college education and with one year of training in library school should receive not less than \$1,380 a year as a beginning salary; that an assistant with only a high school education and one year of training in a library training class (with courses of instruction which approximate those of library school) should receive a beginning salary of not less than \$1,200 a year; that an assistant lacking library school training but having had equivalent training or experience in well-managed libraries should receive the beginning salary of the class whose requirements are most nearly equalled by the length and character of the experience.

Higher minimum salaries should prevail in cities where the cost of living is above the average and in positions demanding considerable responsibility.

Library salaries in every city and state should be adjusted to meet the competition of business, teaching and other vocations, especially in that city and state, to the end that more well-qualified persons may be attracted to library work.

27 Mar 23
The Committee bases the recommendations in the resolution upon salary statistics recently collected, salaries paid to graduates from library schools in 1921 and 1922, budgets of assistants in representative libraries and upon a comparison between school and library salaries.

Salary statistics for large public libraries appeared in the November *A. L. A. Bulletin*. The figures given here are from this, with several libraries added whose names do not appear on

the printed list. The lowest beginning salary in these large libraries for assistants with a minimum of six months library training was \$660; the highest beginning salary, \$1,680; the average, \$1,075. Twenty-three of the thirty-five libraries paid a beginning salary less than \$1,200; twelve paid \$1,200 or more.

Salary statistics of thirty medium sized public libraries will appear in the January *A. L. A. Bulletin*. The lowest beginning salary for library assistants in these libraries with a minimum of six months training was \$600; the maximum, \$1,380; the average, \$963. Only two paid a beginning salary of \$1,200 or more.

The following information was requested from fourteen library schools regarding salaries received by graduates of one-year courses for the years 1921 and 1922: Minimum beginning salary; Maximum beginning salary; Average of beginning salaries. The same information was requested for graduates of two-year courses, which was supplied by two library schools having such courses.

It was stipulated that in giving minimums and maximums and in computing average salaries, graduates who had had more than one full year's library experience before entering library school should not be included. This, of course, was necessary as what the Committee is trying to arrive at is a fair beginning salary for library assistants. Many enter library schools after having had a number of years of library experience and their salaries after leaving the library school are not beginning salaries and would have no bearing on the problem before the Committee.

Answers were received from thirteen library schools. One of these did not eliminate salaries of graduates with previous library experience and, accordingly, has not been included except for graduates of two-year course. The figures collected from library schools show the following:

Of the graduates of 1921 the lowest beginning salary was \$900. In seven schools the lowest beginning salary in each was less than \$1,200;

* Report of the A. L. A. Salaries Committee presented at the Chicago meeting of the Council, December 30, 1922. The resolution as printed was adopted by the Council.

in five schools the salary was \$1,200 or more. The highest minimum salary was \$1,229. The average minimum salary, \$1,108.

In 1922 the lowest beginning salary was \$900. Of four schools the lowest beginning salary in each was less than \$1,200, leaving eight in which the lowest beginning salary was \$1,200 or more; the highest minimum salary in any school being \$1,229. The average minimum salary was \$1,157, an increase over 1921 of \$49.

In 1921 the lowest maximum salary was \$1,400; the highest \$1,900. In two schools the maximum salary was less than \$1,500. In ten schools the maximum was \$1,500 or more. The average maximum was \$1,619.

In 1922 the lowest maximum was \$1,380; the highest, \$1,920.

In three schools the maximum was less than \$1,500. In nine schools the maximum was \$1,500 or more. The average maximum was \$1,655, an increase over 1921 of \$36.

In 1921 the lowest average in any school was \$980; the highest, \$1,550. Eleven schools had an average of \$1,200 or more. The average of all schools was \$1,303.

In 1922 the lowest average in any school was \$1,002; the highest, \$1,465. Five schools had an average of \$1,400 or more. The average salary of all schools for the years 1921 and 1922 in the one year course was \$1,316.

The average salary for the years 1921 and 1922 for graduates of two-year courses with

college requirements for entrance in two library schools was \$1,818.

Teachers' salaries offer the best comparison with librarians' salaries in a report of this kind. We have selected for purposes of comparison the minimum salaries of teachers in elementary, intermediate (junior high) and high schools. Salary schedules are commonly made out on the basis of grade taught rather than of qualifications; and comparison is, therefore, not easy to make. Further, in many of the larger cities experience is a pre-requisite to appointment, so that schedules submitted are not beginning salaries in the sense used in the research of the Salaries Committee.

We have added, because of probable interest, a statement of maximum salaries and number of years required to reach the maximum.

Altho practically all salary schedules now make a marked distinction between the salaries for elementary, intermediate and high school teachers, a movement is under way to break away from this situation and to adopt a "single salary schedule" wherein all teachers of equivalent training and experience are paid the same salary. Denver has such a schedule and the cities starred in Table I are among those mentioned in the N. E. A. Research Bulletin as having schedules involving some of the principles of the single salary schedule.

A single salary schedule would be of much more value for purposes of comparison with

TABLE I
Minimum and maximum salaries of teachers in 15 selected cities 1921-22 *

City	Elementary teachers			Intermediate (Junior High School) teachers			High School teachers		
	Min.	Years to reach	Max.	Min.	Years to reach	Max.	Min.	Years to reach	Max.
Atlanta (white)	1056	3	1536	....	....	....	1572	....	2142
*Birmingham	1000	8	1800	....	....	....	1250	8	2250
Boston	1200	....	2000	....	....	....	Men	....	3276
*Chicago	1200	9	3000	....	....	....	1600	12	3400
*Cleveland	1200	....	2880	1350	....	2700	1500	14	3600
Detroit	1500	5	2000	1700	5	2600	1700	5	2600
Indianapolis	1200	9	2000	....	....	....	1500	10	2800
Los Angeles	1400	....	2000	....	....	....	1800	....	2600
Louisville	1200	....	1550	....	....	....	Women	....	....
Milwaukee	1200	12	2400	....	....	....	1300	8	2100
Minneapolis	1200	8	2000	1200	13	2500	Men	....	2550
New York	1500	9	3250	....	....	....	1600	10	3600
Seattle	1500	....	2100	....	....	....	1400	12	2550
Syracuse	1150	8	1750	Men	....	2650	1900	12	3700
Washington	1200	10	1600	Women	....	....	1800	10	2400
				1600	....	2650	....	....	....
				1250	....	1950	1350	8	1950
				1200	10	2240	1440	8	2240

* From N. E. A. Research Department Bulletin 1.

	Portland	Seattle
Rent	\$240	\$180
Food	420	480
Clothing	228	180
Health and hygiene.....	60	60
Carfare	36	42
Social recreation and vacation.....	96	100
Benevolence, gifts	24	50
Professional dues, training and conventions	6	12
Insurance and savings	90	96
Total	\$1,200	\$1,200

A great many family budgets have been worked out, but little attention has been given to budgets of unmarried women. Ellen H. Richards in "The Cost of Living," published in 1905, gives an itemized statement of the cost of clothing for a student at Chicago University with a total of \$180.50, being the average for four years. She states that with this budget most of the sewing was done at home.

Shoes	\$8.60
Gloves	8.75
Hats	17.00
Underwear	19.50
Shirt-waists	11.10
Odd skirts	12.28
Tailored suits	31.25
Storm garments	8.25
Evening gowns	13.70
Fancy waists	12.00
Summer gowns	7.25
Furs	6.50
Extras	24.32
Total	\$180.50

The cost of clothing has increased 57 per cent since July, 1914, which would make the above articles cost \$283.39 today. This is not taking into account that clothing cost less in 1901 to 1905 than it did in 1914.

The Committee will not attempt to lay out a complete budget but from the facts presented it would seem that it is not possible to obtain satisfactory board and room at less than \$600 a year. The Minneapolis Public Library stated that it would not recommend to any assistant a place that charged less than \$10 a week for room and two meals a day. The Salaries Committee in its report of 1919 found that the average cost of board and room in one hundred and twenty-five cities was \$49.50 a month.

The minimum for clothing should probably not be less than \$250. The lowest beginning salary recommended is \$1,200 and if we deduct \$850, the total of board, room and clothing, we have a balance of \$350, which certainly does not seem excessive to meet all other expenses. As has been stated before, of the assistants making reports those being paid less than \$1,200 and not living at home were receiving money elsewhere in order to meet their expenses.

The last paragraph of the Resolution states that library salaries should be adjusted to meet the competition of business, teaching and other professions. It should be understood that this does not mean necessarily library salaries should equal those paid elsewhere. There are without doubt compensations in library service outside of salary, such as stability of position, more congenial and probably more interesting work than in many other vocations. If library work can be made so attractive that a sufficient number of persons of equal ability as those entering other vocations are ready to come into the library profession, well and good. We are then meeting competition. That we are doing this today, certainly no one will maintain.

In his delightful book "Memories and Notes of Persons and Places" Sidney Colvin, when connected with the British Museum, relates a conversation with Gladstone, in which the Prime Minister said: "I for one would never be a party to increasing the salaries of you gentlemen of the British Museum, for a more delightful occupation I cannot conceive." It would seem that we have been depending largely upon our "delightful occupation" regardless of salary to attract a sufficient number of qualified recruits. No matter how delightful we may think our work, certainly it is not sufficiently attractive to gain for the profession at present salary standards a sufficient number of well qualified persons. At the present time there are being taken into the service:

(1) Some, all too few, who are really fitted for library work.

(2) Many who are young, without adequate preliminary education and library training. Many of these, fortunately, drop out. Their work is never satisfactory and the weakest of them are likely to hang on because they can get more in library work than they could elsewhere. They are the problem of every librarian. Often when a promotion is to be made for a higher position, there is no one to promote because we did not get the right material at the beginning.

(3) Many come into library work on a purely temporary basis because they want something to do and library work will do as well as anything else for the time being. Such assistants come and go. Every day there is a new one appointed for one resigning, whose length of service is numbered in days rather than months or years. The cost of labor turn-over in library service would make a report in itself. That it is tremendous cannot be gainsaid.

We often speak of building up a library. It is as if a man should decide to build a building of permanence and should advertise for carpen-

Assistant. Salary, \$1,020	
Annual expenditures:	
Board and room.....	\$720
Clothing	200
Health	60
Recreation	10
Savings (including insurance).....	—
All other	30

Total \$1,020

It is necessary that I do my sewing. Also laundry, which means that I do not have time for study, reading or other means of recreation.

Assistant. Salary, \$1,080	
Annual expenditures:	
Board and room.....	\$900
Clothing	225
Health	25
Recreation	25
Savings (including insurance).....	—
All other	65

Total \$1,240

Received help from family. No girl can live on \$90 a month and have any comforts or pleasures unless she lives at home or receives financial assistance other than her salary. Impossible to save.

Assistant. Salary, \$900	
Annual expenditures:	
Board and room, a month.....	\$35
Lunch, a month.....	5
	— \$480
Clothing	160
(Cannot be done unless one makes one's clothes one's self.	
Health—	
Dentist	\$17
Examination	5
Nose and throat treatments.....	76
	— 98
Recreation (invitations)	—
Savings (including insurance)	40
All other—	
Laundry (\$6 a month)	\$72
Cleaning clothes	12
Toilet articles	8
Carfare	51
Postage	12
Gifts	10
	— 165

Total \$943

Deficit (\$43) has been covered partly by translation work for Chamber of Commerce and partly by loan.

Assistant. Salary, \$992	
Annual expenditures:	
Board and room	\$780
Clothing	120
Health	—
Recreation	—
Savings (including insurance)	—
All other	92
Total	\$992

The above is a statement, as nearly accurate as possible, of my expenditures by the year of my present salary. Savings there are never any, and if I have any recreation it must come out of the amount allotted for clothes, or from amount earned by working holidays; or by cutting on meals. I have been fortunate enough not to have any doctor's bills so far. This is

mere existence as you see and had I not come into the system with a fair supply of clothes I don't know how I could have existed.

Assistant. Salary, \$1,229	
Annual expenditures:	
Board and room (including laundry).....	\$700
Clothing	300
Health (dental bills only)	25
Recreation	60
Savings (including insurance)	60
All other	84

Total \$1,229

This was accomplished by doing co-operative house-keeping with one other librarian intent on the same economy. The laundry was mailed home, so my only expense for this was the parcel postage. We allowed ourselves \$5 a month for recreation and attempted to save an equal amount. A dentist's bill was fortunately my only need of expenditure for health, as there was no margin left for the expense of prolonged illness. All other expenditures was necessities, including carfare and incidentals.

A fair minimum budget for a library assistant is pretty difficult to determine. In *Library Service* for January 1, 1920, an "estimated minimum salary budget providing for a reasonably care-free and worthy existence" given for Detroit is as follows:

	Yearly
Rent	\$360
Food	500
Personal hygiene	120
Clothing	350
Carfare	54
Health	60
Social recreation, \$3 monthly; vacation, \$4.16 monthly	86
Benevolence, gifts	36
Professional dues, training and conventions....	60
Savings	—
Total	\$1,626

The cost of living in January, 1920, over July, 1914, had increased 90 per cent according to the National Industrial Conference Board. The increased cost of living from January, 1914, to October, 1922, was 57 per cent. The cost of living, according to the latest reports of the National Industrial Conference Board is at the present time increasing, the increase from September 15th to October 15th being one per cent. Professor Irving Fisher predicts that prices will again advance to high levels, altho not as high as were reached following the Armistice, and that thereafter a slow decline will begin but that our country will not return to the pre-war level of prices, at least for many years.

In the report of the Salaries Committee of the Pacific Northwest Library Association, published in March, 1920, "estimated yearly budgets" for Portland and Seattle are given. They are as follows:

TABLE II
Median minimum and maximum salaries of teachers in the U. S., 1921-22.*

	Elementary teachers				Intermediate (Junior High School) teachers				High School teachers			
	No. of cities reporting	Minimum	Years to make maximum	Maximum	No. of cities reporting	Minimum	Years to make maximum	Maximum	No. of cities reporting	Minimum	Years to make maximum	Maximum
Cities with a population over 100,000	59	1200	8	2000	27	1450	10	2400	54	1500	8	2400
Cities between 25,000 and 100,000	136	1000	8	1600	70	1200	8	1835	127	1400	8	2150

* From N. E. A. Research Department Bulletin 1.

library salaries than the schedules submitted in Tables I and II. We are, therefore, adding Table III from E. S. Evenden's, "Teachers' Salaries and Salary Schedules in the U. S." It was prepared in 1919.

TABLE III

Suggested standards for salary schedules of teachers for cities of a population of 25,000 or over (excluding heads of departments, principals, special supervisors, who are assumed to have experience before reaching these positions).

Amt. of prof. prep.—Teachers	Min. sal.	Annual increases	Max. sal.
Normal diploma (6 years study beyond 8th grade) .	1200	6 of \$100	1800
A. B. degree.....	1400	10 of \$100	2400
A. M. degree.....	1600	10 of \$100	2600
Ph. D. degree.....	2000	10 of \$100	3000

The Committee has collected budgets of personal expenditures of forty assistants in thirteen libraries as follows: New York, Brooklyn, Chicago, Boston, St. Louis, Minneapolis, Indianapolis, Washington, Louisville, Atlanta, Syracuse, Cleveland and Los Angeles. The group includes some large and some smaller libraries located in various parts of the country. Three duplicate questionnaires were sent to head librarians in these cities with the request that they be filled out by assistants preferably those receiving the beginning salary of the trained staff and not living at home. This, of course, was not possible in all cases. The salaries of the forty assistants vary from \$750 to \$1,680. The following items were included in the budget: Board and room, clothing, health, recreation, savings (including insurance); all other.

It is probable that for some of these items the figures supplied are approximate rather than exact. However, the cost of board and room is undoubtedly correctly given and for our purpose is the most important item of the budget. Of the forty assistants reporting, six were living at home.

Of the fourteen assistants receiving less than \$1,200 per year, (several of whom were living

at home and paying a nominal price for board and room) ten do not live on their salaries but receive aid from their families or earn additional money elsewhere. Of the thirty-four not living at home, seven were paying less than \$600 per year for board and room. Ten were paying between \$600 and \$700; ten between \$700 and \$800; three between \$800 and \$900 and four, \$900 or more. It is interesting to note that these four were in New York, Chicago, Brooklyn and Boston. In fact the average cost for board and room as given for these cities was \$783, being \$782 for New York, \$779 for Brooklyn, \$760 for Chicago and \$811 for Boston. This, as is shown below, is a cost of \$79 more than the average for the cities as a whole. The average cost of the forty assistants for board and room, including those living at home, was \$644. Of the thirty-four assistants not living at home, the average cost was \$694.

The average cost for clothing was \$240; the lowest, \$120; the highest, \$400. Seven spent less than \$200; twelve, \$200 to \$250; seven, \$250 to \$300; eleven, \$300 to \$350.

Of the cost for health, five of the forty had no expense for the past year. The maximum expense was \$100; average, \$39. Necessarily health would be an item for which the expense would be uneven from year to year.

For recreation, four reported that they spent nothing. The maximum given was \$300; average, \$79.

For savings, fourteen saved nothing. The maximum saved was \$318; average, \$101. Of the fourteen assistants receiving less than \$1,200, only four had any savings. Two of these were living at home; of the other two, one earned money elsewhere and the other received money from her family much in excess of the amount saved.

A few budgets are given here with notes which the assistants added:

ters and other skilled workmen offering much less than the current rate of wages. Perhaps he would secure a few men who would work because they enjoyed building but most of his workmen would be unskilled and temporary. There would be many delays, many haltings in the work and many weak spots in that building. We, as librarians, are trying to build an institution for all time and one thing that makes the building progress so very slow is the fact that the workmen, many of them, are not librarians at all. They have no natural aptitude for the work. They lack sufficient general education and adequate professional training.

The committee does not base its recommendations upon any of the arguments commonly used

for a living wage, altho our libraries are full of reports roundly condemning business concerns for using the argument that their employees live at home and do not require a living wage. The Committee bases its argument upon the need for attracting more well-qualified persons to the profession and it is recommending minimum beginning salaries which, it is believed, will help to this end.

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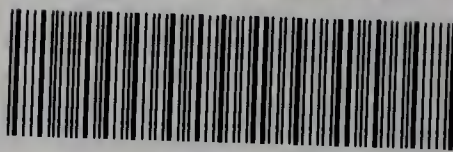
CHARLES H. COMPTON, *Chairman.*

Salaries Committee of the A. L. A.

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